

RESEARCH · FINANCE WORKING PATTERNS

Days in the Office: What Is Actually Normal

378 UK finance professionals on how many days a week they really go in, by level, type of business, location and sector. Neither "everyone is on three days" nor "nobody goes in any more" is true.



What this is built on

The Finance Pay Index asks how many days a week people are actually in the office, not what their employer's policy says. This guide uses the 378 permanent finance professionals, from Accounts Assistant to CFO, who answered up to 14 October 2026, counted once per person. Groups with fewer than eight responses are left out. Two thirds of the responses are London based, so the London picture is the firmest.

The honest picture



Finance Pay Index, data to 14 October 2026, 378 responses.

Three days is the most common arrangement, but only 35% of people are on it. Almost as many are in four or five days (32%), and one in five (19%) is in every day of the week. At the other end, only 14% go in one day or less, and just 5% never go in.

So if you are expecting a senior finance role to be one or two days a week, you are expecting the arrangement of about a third of the market (33%). And if you are on five days and assume everyone else is on three, you are wrong too. Which one you get depends far more on the business than on the role, which is the next page.

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There is no single normal. There is a normal for a PE backed business in Central London, and a very different one for a family owned manufacturer in the Midlands.

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By type of business

GROUP	RESPONSES	ONE DAY OR LESS	TWO OR THREE DAYS	FOUR OR FIVE DAYS	ALL FIVE DAYS
Privately owned	157	10%	43%	47%	31%
Private equity backed	89	13%	70%	17%	6%
Listed (PLC)	46	17%	63%	20%	11%
Venture backed	14	57%	43%	0%	0%
Under 50 staff	74	19%	35%	46%	31%
51 to 200 staff	118	14%	53%	33%	19%
201 to 1,000 staff	101	9%	57%	34%	18%
Over 1,000 staff	84	18%	67%	15%	10%

Finance Pay Index, data to 14 October 2026, 378 responses.

Ownership is the clearest divide. Three in ten (31%) of people in privately owned businesses are in every day. In PE backed businesses it is 6%, and seven in ten (70%) are on two or three days. Venture backed businesses are the most remote of all, though on only 14 responses.

Small businesses are the most polarised. Under 50 staff, three in ten (31%) are in all five days and one in five (19%) are in one day or less. Small firms tend to be all in or barely in, with fewer in between than any other size. The largest businesses are the most standardised, with two thirds (67%) on two or three days.

By location and level

GROUP	RESPONSES	ONE DAY OR LESS	TWO OR THREE DAYS	FOUR OR FIVE DAYS	ALL FIVE DAYS
Central London	191	13%	62%	25%	9%
Greater London	54	19%	46%	35%	20%
Outside London	121	7%	50%	43%	35%
CFO	78	15%	51%	33%	21%
Finance Director	78	14%	59%	27%	14%
Head of Finance or FP&A	43	5%	72%	23%	12%
Financial Controller	48	25%	48%	27%	17%
Finance Manager, FP&A Manager or Business Partner	60	12%	57%	32%	20%
Accountant or Analyst	71	14%	42%	44%	28%

Finance Pay Index, data to 14 October 2026, 378 responses.

Central London is the home of the three day week; only one in twelve (9%) there is in every day. Outside London, 35% are. By level, the junior end goes in most (44% of Accountants and Analysts are in four or five days), and Financial Controllers have the widest spread of any level: a quarter (25%) are in one day or less, while 27% are in four or five.

By sector

SECTOR	RESPONSES	ONE DAY OR LESS	FOUR OR FIVE DAYS	ALL FIVE DAYS
Manufacturing and industrial	28	4%	50%	50%
Construction and property	28	11%	50%	29%
Hospitality, leisure and travel	31	10%	39%	19%
Retail and e-commerce	31	3%	35%	19%
Media and entertainment	26	12%	35%	12%
Professional services	45	11%	29%	24%
Healthcare, pharma and life sciences	25	32%	24%	16%
Technology and SaaS	29	38%	10%	3%

Finance Pay Index, data to 14 October 2026, 243 responses. Sectors with 20 or more responses. Smaller sectors are not shown because a handful of people would move the figures.

Half (50%) of finance people in manufacturing and industrial are in every day. In technology it is 3%, and 38% are in one day or less. If flexibility matters to you, the sector you target matters as much as the job.

Does going in more pay more?

Not in this data. Comparing each salary with the median for its own job title, people who are in one day or less earn the same as people on three days. People in four or five days earn slightly less than those on three, though the gap is too small to be sure of. Those on two days earn about 9% more than those on three, and that gap does hold up. We think the likeliest reason is the kind of business that offers two days: 68% of the two day group work in businesses of over 200 staff (against 45% of everyone else), 35% are PE backed (against 21%) and 65% are in Central London (against 47%), the businesses that pay most. It is not a reward for staying at home. The plain reading is that there is **no pay penalty for working remotely**, and no pay premium for being in every day.

What to ask, and when

- **Treat "hybrid" in an advert as a starting point, not an answer.** Two days a week and four days a week can both be called hybrid, and they are very different jobs. Ask for the number.
- **Ask what the finance team actually does, not what the policy says.** The question that gets an honest answer is "how many days was the team in last week?"
- **Ask whether it has changed in the last year, and which way it is going.** A business that has just moved from two days to four may not have finished moving.
- **Raise it early, not at offer.** If you need two days and the business runs on five, both sides are better off knowing at the first conversation. Raising it at offer stage looks like a new condition, even when it is not.
- **Get it in the offer letter.** If an arrangement was agreed, have it written down. Policies change; a written agreement is harder to change.

Source: Finance Pay Index, data to 14 October 2026, 378 permanent responses with office days. Pay comparisons against the median for each job title; a gap is called real only where its bootstrap 90% interval excludes zero. The advice on what to ask is ours.

If flexibility is part of your next move

TELL US THE NUMBER

Tell us how many days you can do and we will only put you forward for roles that genuinely fit, rather than ones that say hybrid.

ADD YOUR OWN ANSWER

The Finance Pay Index asks about office days as well as pay. Add yours at financepayindex.com and it makes this picture sharper for everyone.

SENIOR FINANCE ONLY

We place CFOs, Finance Directors, Heads of Finance and Financial Controllers, and nothing else, mostly in London.